

CENTRE FOR APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCES *
University of Zimbabwe
P O Box MP 167
Mount Pleasant
HARARE

(CASS Occasional Paper Series - NRM ; 1990)

Decentralising the Proprietorship
of Wildlife Resources
in Zimbabwe's Communal Lands¹

By

Marshall W. Murphree**

1990

(Reprinted August 1996)

* A Member of IUCN, The World Conservation Union.

** Director, Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Zimbabwe.

¹ Subsequently published in: Voices from Africa: Local Perspectives on Conservation. / Edited by Nick Carter and Dale Lewis. Chapter 10 (same title), pp. 133-145. Washington D.C. : WWF, 1993. An earlier version of this chapter was presented as a paper at the annual African Studies Association meeting held at Cambridge University in September, 1988. Research data on which it is based has been conducted by the Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Zimbabwe (CASS), supported by grants from the Ford Foundation and IDRC for applied research on natural resource management in Zimbabwe's communal lands.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| The Background | 1 |
| Policy Initiatives in the 1980s | 2 |
| Land Use Strategies | 5 |
| The Hierarchy of Competing Interest and Authority | 6 |
| Distributive Targets and Structures | 8 |
| Issues of Scale, Management and Phasing | 9 |
| References | 10 |

The Background

Traditional, pre-colonial use of wildlife resources in Zimbabwe and the history of the evolution of policies and practices regarding wildlife in Zimbabwe's communal lands² during the colonial period are not discussed in any detail in this chapter. Broadly speaking, the picture is one of a pre-colonial past in which human populations at far lower population densities than currently prevail managed wildlife resources through localised regimes of communal proprietorship. Utilisation was largely for local consumption, although the commercial exploitation of ivory has a long pre-colonial history in the area. In the second half of the nineteenth century this commercial exploitation of the elephant population assumed different and larger dimensions and became a factor in the colonial intrusions which crystallised in settler occupation in 1890. The processes mentioned above also had important effects on wildlife densities and distribution. Along the main watershed and in most of the country designated as Natural Regions I - III most (but not all) species suffered sharp declines in population densities. In Natural Regions IV and V, and particularly Natural Region V (27% of total land surface) certain species have increased in numbers. These include, importantly in respect to the safari industry, buffalo and elephant. In some cases this increase has been dramatic: Zimbabwe today has more than 50,000 elephant as contrasted to an estimated 10,000 at the turn of the century³.

Natural Region V is characterised by areas of low and erratic rainfall, high temperatures, generally infertile soils and often rough terrain. These areas are also generally on the periphery of Zimbabwe's transport and energy networks, lying in the South-East Lowveld, large tracts of Matabeleland and the Zambezi Valley. Of its 104,400 square kilometres of land, 45% is communal land, 35% is large scale commercial ranch land and 20% National Estate, this being comprised of national parks, safari areas under the control of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (NPWM), and forest land. Commercial exploitation of the wildlife resources in Natural Region V, which holds the core of Zimbabwe's wildlife assets, only seriously commenced in the late 1960's with ventures by commercial ranches in game cropping. Shortly thereafter, the impact of the boom in the international safari business manifested itself and commercial activities shifted largely to this mode of exploitation, hunting safaris being conducted in safari areas under the National Parks estate, on commercial ranches and on concessions allocated by NPWM in communal lands. The industry has experienced steady expansion through the 1970s and 1980s, yielding in 1987 an estimated direct revenue of ZWD 10 million (ten million Zimbabwe dollars), most of it in foreign currency⁴. While, in terms of the national budget, this is a relatively small amount, its foreign currency - or export component - makes it important for national policy. Also important is the fact that the safari industry provides an international market for Zimbabwe in which

² Previously termed at various stages in Zimbabwe's colonial history "Native Reserves" and "Tribal Trust Lands".

³ This in spite of heavy culling carried out to effect ecological balances between elephant populations and vegetation cover. A number of soft-skinned species suffered significant declines in the 1950s and 1960s as a result of game-clearing operations to control the spread of tsetse fly.

⁴ To this statistic must be added the value of wildlife to Zimbabwe's tourist and hotel industry, revenues from game cropping, the farming of certain species such as crocodile, and protein inputs to local diets. The Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism suggested, in a speech to Parliament in 1987, that total direct and indirect revenues from wildlife were in the region of two hundred million Zimbabwe dollars.

its competitors are relatively few and in which supply projections are limited, unlike commodity markets for beef, cotton and grains.

To encourage game cropping and the Country's entry into the international safari market, the Parks and Wildlife Act was enacted in 1975, a specific objective being *"to confer privileges on owners or occupiers of alienated land as custodians of wildlife."* (Zimbabwe, 1975: 5). This Act was a significant departure from the "King's Game" concept, the insight being that efficient and sustainable regimes of wildlife utilisation were likely to be enhanced by local proprietorship. As the quote implies, the Act was directed largely at commercial farmers, but it contains a provision enabling the Minister to designate district councils in communal lands as "appropriate authorities" for the management of wildlife on lands under their jurisdiction, analogous to the "custodianship" of wildlife conferred on owners or occupiers of alienated land. (Zimbabwe, 1975: 12, 66-67). Few if any steps, however, were taken in this direction and, as of mid-1988, no communal land district council had been granted the legal status of appropriate authority for wildlife.

These communal lands, and particularly those in Natural Region V, in many instances contain wildlife resources yielding significant safari incomes and which are also strategically located for the maintenance of genetically viable species-specific populations. They are also zones of acute human/wildlife conflict, often being located on the boundaries of national parks and safari areas. At the same time they have been largely neglected in the development efforts of the Country, are food-deficient and in some instances have clearly been exploited for the benefit of national economic requirements. The creation of the Kariba Dam to provide hydroelectric power for national industrial and urban requirements, displacing local Tonga from their alluvial agricultural land along the Zambezi floodplain, is the most striking example. The displaced Tonga derived little, if any, benefit to offset the costs to them of this event. A situation in which the proceeds from wildlife in these communal lands do not return to their place of origin can only replicate this example in its exploitative dimensions.

In an initial attempt to address the issues involved, NPWM introduced in 1978 a programme designated "WINDFALL" (Wildlife Industries New Development for All). The basic assumption behind Windfall was that human/wildlife conflict would be reduced and attitudes towards conservation improved in affected communal lands if wildlife proceeds were returned to their source of origin. This was to be done by making meat from culls in adjacent National Parks Estate available to local inhabitants, and by returning revenues from safari hunting to the relevant district councils. In the event WINDFALL largely failed to achieve its objectives. Little meat found its way back to local communities and only a small proportion of the proceeds survived the attrition of the multi-staged route of bureaucratic accountancy it had to travel before returning to local district councils, let alone to originating communities. An even more fundamental deficiency in WINDFALL was its failure to generate local participation in decision-making and a sense of local-level proprietorship. The little in the way of revenues which did find its way back to source communities was regarded as a government handout, conveying little sense of the relationship between the receipts from, and management of, the resource.

Policy Initiatives in the 1980s

Aware of the deficiencies of WINDFALL and encouraged by the new Government of Zimbabwe's ideological and policy commitment to localised planning and implementation in the development process, NPWM produced in 1984 a new programme entitled "CAMPFIRE" (Communal Lands Management Programme for Indigenous Resources). Detailed in a 110-page document⁵, the CAMPFIRE programme is consistent with Government's policy stance on decentralised planning and management, as evidenced by the President's Address to Parliament of 24th June, 1987, which contains the statement: *"With regard to wildlife management, it is my Government's intention to extend this responsibility to the communal people through the introduction of management of indigenous resources."* It is also consistent with current Zimbabwean policy directions on environmental conservation which have as their central premise the insight that this is only viable when it is undertaken by relevant populations as an investment in a sustained programme of resource exploitation. They have the further insight that the "relevant populations" are those who live within the micro-environments which sustain the natural resources concerned, who pay the price for their sustained maintenance⁶, who must reap the benefits of this investment, and who, at the smallest viable operational level, have the collective capacity to manage these resources. The CAMPFIRE programme is thus essentially utilitarian in its approach to wildlife conservation, although this does not involve a perspective implying that local populations have no appreciation of wildlife stemming from aesthetic or moral values. It reflects rather a recognition of the dynamics of economic motivation which necessarily impose themselves on rural populations under subsistence conditions and seeks to restore a localised custodianship which can give scope to the fusion of ecological responsibility and community interest which characterises traditional African cultures.

The CAMPFIRE scheme, in the words of the programme document, seeks to:

- *obtain the voluntary participation of communities in a flexible programme which incorporates long term solutions to resources problems;*
- *introduce a system of group ownership with defined rights of access to natural resources for the communities resident in the target areas;*
- *provide the appropriate institutions under which resources can be legitimately managed and exploited by the resident communities for their own direct benefit;*
- *provide technical and financial assistance to communities which join the programme to enable them to realise these objectives⁷.*

⁵ Martin, 1986.

⁶ The price paid for maintenance of wildlife populations in communal areas by local inhabitants is significant. It involves the allocation of land for the purpose and annual crop losses to marauding species. It also includes the possibility of injury or death caused by dangerous animals, a possibility which in some contexts is very real. In one community of sixty households currently being studied in the CASS programme, ten injuries and three deaths have been caused by buffalo and elephant in the past three years.

⁷ Martin, 1986: 10.

The "*system of ownership*" envisaged involves the creation of locally-based natural resource co-operatives with essentially the same rights and obligations as the private owners of commercial ranches, all inhabitants of the community being shareholders. Profits from the enterprise may, at the discretion of the community, be used for communal benefits or dispersed to individual shareholders. For the programme to be implemented, the community (or natural resource co-operative) would have to obtain legal proprietorship of wildlife and other resources, and would have to develop the necessary management structures and strategies. To assist communities in these tasks the programme proposes the establishment of an implementing agency operated by Government.

Clearly the implementation of such a programme requires the careful orchestration of complex detail, and much of the programme document's 110 pages are devoted to this orchestration. Some supporters of the programme have suggested that the document is too detailed in this respect, making it difficult to present to target communities. This aside, the programme is impressive in its bold response to the problems produced by past policy and its sensitivity to the broad range of social, economic and ecological factors involved. It has been cited in international circles as a model approach to the communal management of wildlife, and within Zimbabwe has broad public support at the highest levels. This notwithstanding, the position in mid-1988, four years after its announcement, was that no CAMPFIRE agency was in place, and no specific instance of a district council implementation of the scheme could be cited. The CAMPFIRE proposals appeared to be trapped in a rictus of bureaucratic inertia, attracting general endorsement but little in the way of formal implementation. Part of the reason for this could be attributed to the organisational complexities mentioned above, but there were more fundamental and unresolved conflicts of interest and perspective which lay at the heart of the impasse.

This impasse was broken in dramatic fashion in November, 1988, when two district councils, Guruve and Nyaminyami, were given "appropriate authority" status over the wildlife resources in the areas of their jurisdiction by the Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism. This status empowered these district councils to, subject to quota restrictions imposed by Government, determine schemes of utilisation for their wildlife, set up their own enterprises and enter into contracts with private organisations for this purpose, receive all revenues directly and disperse these revenues at their discretion. Responsibility for problem animal control, law enforcement and the protection of the resource also accrued to them. The result in both districts has been intense local interest and organisational activity, the creation of numerous community wildlife committees, increased cropping for local meat consumption on authorised and sustainable lines and greatly augmented district incomes from wildlife, anticipated to be in the magnitude of approximately ZWD 500,000 (five hundred thousand Zimbabwe dollars) in each district. Fuelled by these developments other district councils in the Country have actively pursued plans to similarly obtain appropriate authority status in 1990. A CAMPFIRE Association of Rural Communities was formed by participating district councils in August of 1989 and an NPWM report lists 26 district council or community wildlife projects in the planning or implementation stages during the year⁸.

The reason for this dramatic turn-around in the fortunes of the CAMPFIRE programme can be stated succinctly as a coalescence of administrative resolve, political imperative and judicious extension support. With a supportive national policy on decentralisation

⁸ Zimbabwe Government, 1989.

and suitable legislative instruments, Zimbabwe was fortunate in having an administration in its Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management and its Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism with the resolve to actually implement policy and the courage to experiment in a genuine collaboration with district councils in wildlife management. This coincided with a growing pressure at district and community levels to assert claims over local resources, claims which previously had rested more on form than substance. Finally, a coalition of local non-governmental organisations, sensitive to local initiatives, provided carefully orchestrated extension support in close collaboration with NPWM and district councils, the emphasis being on the enhancement of local management capacities rather than donor aid.

The year 1989, therefore, provided a success story. It is, however, a success story which must be qualified in two respects. Firstly, it relates to an evolving programme which will bring with it its own set of problems and competing interests. Secondly, the factors in success mentioned above are paralleled by issues and constraints which inhibited the rapid implementation of CAMPFIRE in the first instance and which will continue to be factors in its evolution. It is to these issues and constraints which this chapter turns in the sections which follow. They are analysed within the Zimbabwean context but can to a larger extent be generalised to other countries in eastern and southern Africa. A further factor, outside the scope of this chapter, deserves mention. This is the involvement of these countries in a large international network of current environmental concerns. This involvement can have positive dimensions, providing valuable regional collaboration, international assistance and insights. It can also be negative, producing direct or indirect constraints on national initiatives and in its worst form becoming a type of environmental neo-imperialism seeking to impose an environmental ethos neither relevant to African needs nor consistent with African cultural perspectives.

Land Use Strategies

Enthusiastic public support at the highest level for policies of decentralised management of natural resources has tended to mask the fact that there are in effect at the national level three "lobbies" regarding the allocation of land for wildlife exploitation in the communal lands situated in Natural Regions IV and V. The first of these, the "wildlife lobby", has a heterogeneous constituency involving a spectrum of support which includes sentimental conservationism, safari operator interests and those who believe that wildlife provides the best, most economically efficient and ecologically rational form of land usage for large areas in these communal lands. A second, "agricultural", lobby disputes this, arguing that with improved technologies of crop production and the introduction of suitable crop varieties, arable agricultural production will become not only viable but economically more productive. Alternatively, there are those holding this perspective who suggest that, with the eradication of tsetse fly, cattle production will be a more rational use of this land. This lobby has strong support in certain international aid agencies which have funded tsetse fly eradication programmes and regional schemes of agricultural development and, therefore, have a vested interest in the perspective involved. It also draws support from agricultural extension agencies, which have the best on-the-ground extension networks in these communal lands. Finally, there is a third, "resettlement" lobby which allies itself with the second, but for different reasons. This lobby draws its motivation from national political considerations, in its more extreme mode being a form of political expediency and seeing these communal lands, with their low population densities (typically 5-10 persons per. square kilometre) as a convenient

dumping ground for the resettlement of persons living in the overcrowded communal lands in the middle and highveld. Ironically, this lobby finds allies in the commercial farming and industrial sector which finds this a convenient solution to demands for land reform and to the post-employment retirement requirements of wage labourers⁹, and also finds allies among some bureaucrat guardians of the national estate who see it as a mechanism to divert pressure away from demands for this type of land.

The perspectives involved in these conflicting views do not, of course, necessarily imply mutually exclusive options for land use¹⁰, nor would their proponents claim this. They do, however, imply a basic conflict in policy direction, the evolved resolution of which will determine land use strategy and progressively close off alternative options. This is particularly the case if the agricultural / resettlement option prevails, an option which is likely to exhibit a uni-linear and irreversible trajectory.

Analysts emphasising the weight of political imperatives are likely to predict that the resettlement option will probably prevail not only because of any intrinsic arguments which can be adduced in its favour but also because of its response to political expediency. It is, however, simplistic to suggest that governments anywhere, and in Africa specifically, act solely from imperatives of short-term political expediency. They do not, as the record of Zimbabwean Government policies since 1980 can amply demonstrate. What is required, however, at the present juncture if short-term political imperatives are to be balanced by rational long-term land use considerations, is a more definitive comparative analysis of the costs and benefits of wildlife exploitation strategies, set against the economic potential and long-term effects of other options. Such a definitive analysis is not currently available, and its execution must rank high on the agenda of the research programmes involved¹¹.

The Hierarchy of Competing Interest and Authority

Devolution of wildlife proprietorship in Zimbabwe must run a gamut of relevant interest and authority modalities in the centre-periphery administrative hierarchy. The spectrum represented by this hierarchy runs from central government to the communal land inhabitant. Factors impinging on the strategies of this last polarity, the peasant farmer or household, are discussed in the next section. This section deals with the three levels of administrative structure which stand above the household and which separately and in

⁹ CASS has recently conducted a survey among the 20,000 plus immigrants into the Zambezi Valley since 1980. Twenty-six percent of the new settlers have come to the Valley from wage employment; seventy percent from other communal lands.

¹⁰ Multi-species regimes of grazing, involving livestock and wildlife, are among the potential options. These are being investigated by a current WWF research project.

¹¹ There is a growing body of research results in Zimbabwe which addresses this issue and which suggests high values for wildlife modes of marginal land utilisation, typically in the range of eight to ten dollars per hectare per annum. Depending on environmental context, this can mean incomes several times as great as current cash incomes from cotton cropping for the populations involved, as our current collaborative research with the WWF research team shows. The fact that many commercial ranchers have shifted from cattle to wildlife is also strong presumptive evidence for the strength of the wildlife option. These examples do not, however, adequately compare the efficiency of this option with that of others projected under conditions of small-scale peasant agricultural production, in part because the arguments put forward by the "agricultural lobby" are themselves data-deficient and presumptive.

their relationships with each other critically determine the options which the household has available. These three levels are: a) central government, in both its policy-making and its executive functions, administered through relevant ministries; b) the district councils, which in terms of the District Councils Act (amended 1980) have wide-ranging powers and responsibilities to administer the assets of communal lands for the benefit of their inhabitants; and c) the WADCO (Ward Development Committee) with similar but more restricted authority to further the interests of the inhabitants of the ward. Each WADCO has representation on the district council through its chairman, who with other WADCO chairmen are the councillors. Putatively, the ward is comprised of 10,000 inhabitants; in conditions typical of communal lands in Region V, it is more likely to contain 2,000 to 3,000 people living on a geographically defined and usually traditionally legitimated land base of anywhere from 200 to 500 square kilometres. Given the particular characteristics of the wildlife resources, it is likely to be the smallest viable unit for wildlife management, and then only under particularly favourable conditions.

Clearly the inter-relationships between central government, district council and ward are complex, involving different perspectives, spheres of responsibility and competencies. For the sake of brevity, this section focuses only on one characteristic common to them all, which is the bureaucratic impulse to maintain authority. Policies of devolution typically produce a tendency to preserve authority and its benefits at each level in the hierarchy. The issue of the devolution of wildlife proprietorship produces no exception to this generalisation, as can be illustrated by the record on the distribution of wildlife revenues under the WINDFALL schemes. This record produces statistics shown below in tabular form for revenues generated from wildlife in communal lands, and disbursements made to district councils.

| Year(s) | Revenue | Disbursements to Councils | Disbursements |
|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| 1981-1984 | \$ 610,000 | \$220,000 | 36% |
| 1985 | \$ 820,000 | \$260,000 | 32% |
| 1986 | \$1,500,000 | \$530,000 | 35% |

Without going into the reasons for, and the implications of, this retention of revenues by central Government, the point is made here that the benefits to the central bureaucracy derived from this are a powerful disincentive to promote a system of devolution in which these revenues are paid directly to district councils or wards. District councils are aware of the situation and are becoming increasingly aggressive in their attempts to extend their authority in the wildlife sphere.

Interactions between district councils and WADCOs show similar characteristics. Typically, such districts incorporate communal areas with high population densities and little wildlife and also others with low human populations but with rich wildlife resources. Thus these councils are dominated by councillors from wards which neither produce nor pay the price for wildlife revenues and tend in their allocative policies to appropriate the revenues of the wards that do. This creates suspicion and mistrust in the wildlife-rich but developmentally backward wards, coupled with a strong resistance to council involvement in resource management at the ward level. In one recent ward-level discussion on the issue, this perspective was put starkly to us by a ward authority. "Council," he said flatly, "is a thief. It takes our revenues away from us with one hand and offers nothing but food-for-work drought relief handouts with the other." Again,

without going into the implications of this for the maintenance of dependency relationships, it is clear from our research that the perceived lack of return of dividends is the most important factor in negative attitudes to wildlife at the ward level, more important than the investment costs mentioned earlier¹². It is equally clear that access to wildlife revenues by councils is a powerful disincentive to the further devolution of proprietorship to ward levels.

Distributive Targets and Structures

Basically, this is the issue of what form dividends should take, and whether they should be targeted at the farmer/household or the "community", equated for the purposes of this discussion as the ward. The issue is an important determinant for the coalescence of grass-roots motivational resolve which is a necessary dynamic in the CAMPFIRE concept, and a critically important one when circumstances require some form of compromise between cattle and wildlife utilisation.

In Zimbabwe, as in most of Africa, the basic production and consumption unit in peasant agriculture is the household. Even under conditions of communal land tenure, the household carries out its arable agricultural activities on land to which it has exclusive and permanent access in practical terms. Thus the linkage between the resource base, labour and capital inputs, yield and income, is tight and explicit and provides a strong motivation for efficient and energetic labour and management practices. During the colonial period this security of access was often breached by forced relocation; in the post-1980 context the subjective perceptions of permanence of tenure has re-established itself and, together with improvements in agricultural extension, agricultural credit facilities and market conditions, has largely been responsible for the dramatic successes achieved by communal land agriculture. Production and income is, in effect, 'privatised' to the household level with generally effective results, even if it is attended by the consequence of inequality between household incomes.

Arable production is not, however, the only activity in most peasant farming systems in Zimbabwe. Cattle are an important component, providing draft power, manure, milk and meat, and studies show a clear positive correlation between cattle ownership, arable yields and household incomes. Cattle ownership is also privatised to household and individual levels and cattle constitute for most households the most important movable capital asset, capable of being bought, sold, used, loaned or borrowed. The resource base required for cattle ownership is, however, different than the privatised access to land necessary for arable activities. This resource base, the grazing commonage, is a communal asset to which the household shares access with other households in the community. This use of common property for private production creates its own set of problems, familiar to students of the "commons" debate. Discussion on the issues involved is, however, beyond the scope of this chapter; the point being made here is that household evaluations of any proposed production scheme will largely be determined in terms of its perceived effects on the household's two major items of productive capital, its lands and its cattle. This holds true even for the inhabitants in the communal lands which are the focus of this chapter and where, until recently, cattle ownership has been precluded by the presence of tsetse fly. These populations are fully aware of the benefits

¹² This is a critical issue in programme implementation. Wards which have received wildlife revenues from council show markedly different perspectives on wildlife issues, a fact which our research can demonstrate both descriptively and statistically.

of cattle ownership and any proposals which restrict or preclude this ownership will have, for acceptance, to demonstrate direct benefit returns at the household level equal to or exceeding those anticipated from cattle.

This implies a system of shares and dividends targeted at the household level, a form of corporate communal capitalism envisaged in the CAMPFIRE project document but muted in most promotional discussion by its proponents. Returns to the community for communal projects have been emphasised instead. Households are not unaware of the benefits of such a step in terms of an increased range of services (schools, clinics, grinding mills, improved roads) made available at little or not cost to themselves. In my view, however, this can only be regarded, in terms of motivational dynamics, as an interim inducement to programme implementation, carrying with it the promise of a further devolution of distributive benefit in the form of direct income to households.

Issues of Scale, Management and Phasing

Given the particular nature of wildlife resources, viable management strategies for sustained exploitation often require a territorial base larger than that which wards have available. Furthermore, an ecologically sound determination of this territorial base may conflict with ward or even district boundaries. These considerations suggest a necessary compromise in many instances between social and ecological criteria, possibly including new structures of coalition between wards and between districts.

Scale is also a factor in the management issues involved. There are, of course, several modes of wildlife utilisation available, all which need to be explored and none of which should be relied on exclusively. Currently, however, the most economically productive mode of exploitation, in terms of cash returns, is safari hunting. At present the management skills necessary for this industry are a monopoly of entrepreneurial professionals. Wards and districts interested in managing their wildlife resources would like to capture net profits currently going to these operators, but none possess at this point in time either the managerial skills and experiences or the capital required to mount safari operations of their own. A phased transmission of managerial capacities is, therefore, required, councils and wards negotiating transitional contracts with safari operators from a position of strength as legal proprietors of the resource. Some progress on this front is already in evidence. NPWM is now awarding safari concessions on communal lands only after taking advice from district councils, and district councils with appropriate authority status make their own decisions on this matter. Some safari operators have, as a consequence, been excluded from these contracts and others, with a prescience concerning future changes in the structure of proprietorship, have begun to consider the possibility of acting as employees of councils, filling dual management and training roles.

Phasing stratagems are also relevant to the issue of appropriate levels of devolution in authority and benefit. This analysis has implied a case for the devolution of authority for wildlife to the ward level in most instances, and for devolution of distributive benefits to the household level, again in most instances. Even if these arguments are accepted, it can be suggested that these objectives are best achieved in a series of progressive stages. There are counter-arguments to this position, and the most effective stratagems are likely to be those which are tailor-made to suit specific contexts. The contexts in which wildlife management schemes in Zimbabwe's communal lands can be implemented provide a broad spectrum of circumstances in respect to the scale and

nature of the resource base, socio-economic conditions and levels of capacity for self-management. Strategies for implementation should, therefore, not be over-generalised. Furthermore, they should be flexible and adaptable to unanticipated developments. Schemes for the decentralised proprietorship of wildlife resource in Zimbabwe are, like most development plans, not immutable and are likely to routinely change in their context and direction. They are, in effect, experiments in socio-ecological engineering, the success or failure of which is dependent as much on their capacity to adjust to evolving realities as on the competence of their original planning.



References

- Martin, R.B. (1986) *Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources*. Branch of Terrestrial Ecology, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management. Revised version of April, 1986. 110 p.
- Zimbabwe, Government of (1975) *Parks and Wildlife Act*. 1975.
- Zimbabwe, Government of (1989) *The Status of Projects Involving Wildlife in Rural Development in Zimbabwe*. Report of the Branch of Terrestrial Ecology, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management. 31 p.



This work is licensed under a
Creative Commons
Attribution – NonCommercial - NoDerivs 3.0 License.

To view a copy of the license please see:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

This is a download from the BLDS Digital Library on OpenDocs
<http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/>